

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Newsletter

March 2017

Summer School on Ecumenism

The third School on Ecumenism was held at the Upper Riccarton Methodist Church from 20th till the 24th February. The School, a programme of the National Dialogue on Christian Unity, attracted twenty-five participants. Notable among those attending was a group of eight Young Ecumenists of the Pacific (YEP), all from the Methodist Church of Fiji. Three lecturers from Charles Sturt University of Canberra formed the basis of our faculty. This enabled the participants to enrol for credit, writing the required reflections and essays that would be assessed. Along with these international visitors the faculty also included local presenters: Tony Franklin-Ross on ecumenical history in New Zealand, Jocelyn Armstrong on ecumenical entities NCC to CCANZ, John England on ecumenism in Asia-Pacific, Cardinal John Dew on the commitment of the Catholic Church to ecumenism, Sr Bertha Hurley and Matthew Gardener on inter-religious dialogue, John Roberts traced Maori response to ecumenism with Keita Hotere responding and Terry Wall who spoke on a spirituality for ecumenism and introduced the new convergence document on the unity of the church from the Faith and Order Commission which is entitled *The Church: Toward a Common Vision*.



Wessley Vatanitawake (right) led a group of Young Ecumenists of the Pacific from Fiji.

Highlights of our time together were the Thursday afternoon when participants had an exposure to Christchurch after the earthquakes led by Jill Hawkey and Rob Ferguson. On the Friday afternoon we were privileged to visit the Greek Orthodox Church in Malvern Street and to be introduced to the rich iconography by the Rev. Robert Gribben. The school enjoyed daily worship led by Robert Gribben, Professor emeritus from the Uniting Church of Australia. The other Australian visitors were Rev. Ray Williamson who outlined the history of the ecumenical movement and Bishop

Stephen Pickard who reflected theologically on the four marks of the Church – one, holy, catholic and apostolic – and challenged us with his development of a theology for a slow Church! The School, which convenes every second year, enables Christians from different traditions to meet and learn together about the abnormal situations the churches find themselves in – that of remaining divided.



Australian visitors: Bishop Stephen Pickard, Rev. Prof. Robert Gribben and Rev. Dr Ray Williamson.

National Dialogue on Christian Unity

The annual forum of the new ecumenical body the National Dialogue for Christian Unity was held in Wellington at the Catholic Centre on Thursday 2nd March. Representatives of the Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches attended with observers from CWS, SCM, UCANZ, the Salvation Army and the Presbyterian Church. A letter was received from the Presbyterian Church which indicated that at the General Assembly in 2016 a decision had been made in principle to seek full membership of the National Dialogue for Christian Unity. This will take some time to work through the various courts of the Church. Andrew Judd was the guest speaker. He had been mayor of New Plymouth and came to see that his attitudes and ways of acting excluded Maori from full participation within the Council. When he proposed a Maori Ward he experienced sharp and sustained criticism. Andrew, an Anglican, shared his personal painful story describing himself as a “recovering racist.” He spoke of his hikoi to Parihaka, learning the history of expropriation of land. On the way he was joined by Maori and others who wanted to express solidarity with his learning experience. He found that on the journey he walked to a new place symbolically. The National Dialogue on Christian Unity sees this a model for bilateral dialogues between the churches: if we walk together, and talk together, we may well find ourselves in a new place. In the new place our divisions may not appear to be so deep or intractable. Reports on the bilateral

dialogues between the churches will be received at the National Dialogue for Christian Unity executive at its meeting on 17 May at St. John's College.

West Papua supported by World Council of Churches

"Members of a church-backed coalition have called on Indonesia to open access to West Papua for international journalists, independent observers, human rights organisations and the International Red Cross. The call came at an international consultation hosted by the World Council of Churches with the International Coalition on Papua on 22 February at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches Dr Olav Fyske Tveit, who visited West Papua in 2012 said, "We support the struggle for human rights of the people of Papua. We urge an end to the ongoing violence and impunity. We support the call for social and economic justice through serious dialogue and a concrete process that seeks to address root causes of the present problems". The Rev. Francois Pihate, General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, based in Fiji, said the churches in the region are very concerned about violence in Papua. How can we as churches be ignorant of what is going on outside our own world? That is why we churches are concerned." Veronica Koman of the Papua Itu Kita based in Jakarta said, "The government of Indonesia fails to address the root problem, which is the historical problem. The West Papuan people will not stop screaming for independence until the root cause is addressed."

World Council of Churches Weekly Newsletter

Asia Mission Conference

This major conference with the theme "Journey Together: Prophetic Witness to the Truth and Light in Asia" will be held in Yongon, Myanmar from 11th till the 17th October 2017. Associated with the conference will be a celebration of the Christian Conference of Asia's diamond jubilee. Expressions of interest to attend need to be sent to the acting director of Mission and Ecumenical by 30th April.

Kokeqolo Water Scheme

The special appeal of Mission & Ecumenical for 2016 has been extended and will run throughout 2017. A report to the Board meeting on 8th March indicated that donations had now reached \$37,000. This represents a significant increase and we are on track to reach our target. A big thank you to all groups and persons who have made contributions to this project which will change the lives of those in the village – the school, the youth centre and the

head offices of the United Church. The Solomon Islands have been experiencing a water crisis in recent months and the provision of safe, reliable sources of water is critical.

It is hoped that bores that the United States military abandoned at the conclusion of the Second World War will be able to be redeveloped.

Goldie College news

A recent letter from the General Secretary of the United Church of the Solomon Islands Burabeti Tabe shared news of the opening of the new Computer Laboratory at Goldie College. An Australian company OCTEC Ltd has donated a suite of forty computers and accessories. The computers are able to be monitored from Australia! 600 students are enrolled at Goldie College, and with news of the new computer laboratory there has been "a sudden rush of parents requesting space for their children there."

In addition to that Burabeti reports that Goldie College is in good heart and standards are improving. There is a real need for good teachers. They are in conversation with the Methodist Church of Fiji for biology, accounting and economics teachers. They ask if there might be a New Zealander who speaks English fluently who might consider spending some time at Goldie College teaching English. Please contact the acting director with expressions of interest.

Commemorating the Reformation

2017 marks the 500th anniversary since Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg. Events around the world will mark this important event. Otago University is having a series of speakers on the significance of the Reformation for today. Dissent is not always welcomed but there are times when, out of loyalty to both gospel and church, the prophetic word of courage needs to be heard and heeded. Pope Francis has said that the Reformation unmasked corruption in the Church in the sixteenth century and Martin Luther should be honoured for his witness. The Lutheran World Federation and The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity have published a guide for commemorating the Reformation. *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic commemorations of the Reformation in 2017.* A substantial document, it is available on the website of each partner.

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**Methodist Mission and Ecumenical
Annual Appeal 2016
Kokeqolo Water Scheme Fund**

Life giving water

**The appeal is from United Church Assembly Office to develop a
Reliable water supply for the village of Kokeqolo**

The people of Kokeqolo, the schools and the United Church of Solomon Islands assembly office are dependent on rain water. A recent survey of the area located a bore hole that was used by the American forces during the Second World War. The United Church has requested our help to use this source of water by building a water supply unit. The cost is NZ \$ 80,000. M&E committed to raise \$ 40,000 which is half of the total cost and asked UCSI to look for another donor to cover the other half.

The beneficiaries of this water supply will be

Kokeqolo Primary School



Youth Centre



United Church Office



Methodist Mission and Ecumenical appeals to all to contribute to the

**KOKEQOLO WATER SCHEME FUND
To raise \$ 40,000 in 2016**

... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. [Matt. 5:16]

Mission is possible only with your participation and contribution to the fund.

Mission and Ecumenical Fund is registered with the **Charities Commission**.

Registration Number CC51048. Receipts will be issued for tax rebate on the donation.

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ANNUAL APPEAL 2016 - KOKEQOLO WATER SCHEME FUND

Please remember to send this cover slip for a receipt when you make a deposit.

Please send your donations by cheque in favour of Mission and Ecumenical Fund To Rev. Prince Devanandan Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Private Bag 11903 Ellerslie Auckland 1542	You could also make your donation directly into BNZ Account No. 02-0800-0766004-03 Amount: \$ _____ Name: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____
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